

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 11-14, 22-24, 26-30, 34, 36 and 37 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, (1) independent claims 1 and 14, as well as dependent claims 2-4, are amended to depend from claim 22; (2) claims 11-13 are amended to depend from claim 14; and (3) claims 7-10, 15-21, 31-33 and 35 are canceled.

The amendments to the claims are made in order to place the application in condition for allowance. Specifically, the Office Action indicated that claims 22-24 and 26-30 were allowed. By this Amendment, the remaining claims are made to depend from these allowed claims, with duplicate and non-elected claims being appropriately cancelled.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance as discussed above and further discussed below; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments merely revise the claims to depend from allowed claims; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims, and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the Final Rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication in the Final Rejection that claims 22-24 and 26-30 are allowed.

By this Amendment, the remaining claims, including previous independent claims 1 and 14, are amended to depend from these allowed claims (with duplicate and non-elected claims being canceled). As such, Applicant respectfully submits that all of remaining claims 1-5, 11-14, 22-24, 26-30, 34, 36 and 37 are now in condition for allowance.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-5, 7-9 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,949,294 (Kondo) in view of JP 732, JP 540 or JP 606.¹

Claims 10-21 and 33-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kondo in view of JP 732, JP 540 or JP 606, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,684,843 (Ohya) or U.S. Patent No. 6,057,633 (Inoi).

Each of these rejections are respectfully traversed.

Specifically, in the Office Action, independent claim 22 was indicated to be allowed. By this Amendment, all of the rejected claims are either canceled or amended to depend from the allowed claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that each of these rejections are overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of each of these rejections are thus respectfully requested.

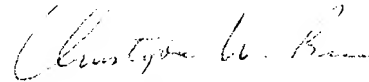
III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-5, 11-14, 22-24, 26-30, 34, 36 and 37 are earnestly solicited.

¹ Although the statement of this rejection in the Office Action indicates that claim 39 was rejected, Applicant notes that there is no claim 39 in the application. However, there is a claim 37 in the application, and as claim 37 is not otherwise mentioned in the Office Action, perhaps the claim intended to be referred to was claim 37.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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